MIDWEST COMPUTER GENEALOGISTS

NEWSLETTER

www.foxwoodsprings.org

Volume XXIII November, 2019 Number 11

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM, MISSOURI SETTLERS?

Midwest Computer Genealogists will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 16 in the Foxwood Room at Brookdale Foxwood Springs in Raymore, Missouri. Our speaker will be Beth Foulk, one of our most frequent presenters, who will discuss "Where Did You Come From, Missouri Settlers?". Many of us have ancestors who came to Missouri during the 19th Century, and they came by various land and water routes. The family of President Harry S. Truman came to this state before the Civil War, and, like many of our ancestors, they experienced the many trials of this conflict. Members of the Truman family were supporters of the Confederate cause, but many of us have ancestors who served on both sides.

Beth, a frequent MCG presenter, teacher, and active genealogist, says on her web site, www.genealogydecoded.com, "Genealogy is more than collecting records, dates, and places of our ancestors. It's about understanding the lives of the people whose choices shaped our lives in the most personal ways. It's about knowing ourselves through the people who came before us".

Beth has previously spoken to us about the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, Women in the Civil War, The War of 1812 and the Mexican War, Colonial Pennsylvania, Timelines, "Searching for Adoption Records", etc. She describes these presentations on her site.

Beth is an excellent teacher and presenter, and you won't want to miss this presentation. Put November 16 on your calendar, and join us. Everyone is welcome to attend.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

The town of Foster, Walnut Township, Bates County, Missouri was founded in 1883. My wife, Dorothy Jean (Newcomb) Morse, and I both have deep roots in this area of Bates County.

Before the town of Foster existed, I had relatives on my fathers side who came to this area in the 1830's and 1840's. As I wrote last month, my 3-great grandparents, Thomas and Sarah Woodfin, came to Walnut Township with their son, John, and his wife, Hannah (Hiatt) Woodfin, and their family about 1840. Also, Oliver Hazard Perry and Charlotte (Brians) Miller came to the township on the eastern edge of Walnut Township, New Home Township, about 1840 as well. Quoting an article titled "Foster History Preserved" by E. E. Laughlin, May 12, 1916, "The township was named for the huge walnut trees that grew on the creek banks." In the article, it was indicated that some trees that were cut down had between 300 and 400 rings, indicating how old these trees were. Walnut Township's western border was at the Kansas state line.

During the Civil War, all of these families had to leave Bates County and lost almost all of their possessions. Following the Civil War, these families returned, although some members had lost their lives during the Civil War. Those who came back and reclaimed their properties rebuilt and continued living there. A daughter of the Woodfins, Mary Elizabeth, married a son of the Millers, William Barton, in December 1869.

Also in 1869, Peter Young Morse came to Walnut Township and helped found and build the town of Walnut. He married Nancy Ward, whose family

came to Bates County in 1870, on May 29, 1873. They ran a general store, and Peter was the postmaster.

Clark Frank Morse, son of Peter and Nancy, married Alma Dona Miller, daughter of William and Mary Miller, on January 17, 1906. From this marriage, Albert Frank Morse, my father, was born on July 11, 1909.

There were many coal mines in Walnut Township and New Home Township. When the railroad came through the area, it bypassed the town of Walnut. So, a new town was built about 2 miles northeast of Walnut. The new town wanted to keep the name of Walnut, but permission to do so was refused. It then was named Foster for Charles Foster. He was one of the men who bought the land and had the town built, and he was also a former governor of Ohio. Since there were many coal mines in the area, the town grew. Peter Y. Morse and his family moved to Foster, where he became the first postmaster.

David and Laura Jessie (Mooney) Janssens were married April 23, 1889 in Kansas City, Missouri. They moved to many different places and had 14 children. Child number 12 was Mildred Catherine Janssens, my mother, born October 21, 1910 in Parkville, Platte County, Missouri. The family moved to Bates County in 1917. They rented property until 1920, when they bought a farm north of Foster, Walnut Township. She attended school in Foster, which only went through grade 10. Ironically, she and Albert Morse graduated from Foster in 1927. Albert and Mildred reconnected several years later and were married on November 6, 1940 in Rich Hill, Osage Township, Bates County, Missouri. I, Albert Frank Morse, Jr, was born in a hospital in Fort Scott, Bourbon County, Kansas on January 3, 1942. I came home to Rich Hill where I was raised.

Ralph and Sarah (Gaston) Newcomb were married January 1, 1908. They were residents of Bates County, with their families living in either Walnut or New Home Township. They had a son, Herbert Edgar. He married Dorothy McDaniel on December 24, 1932. She had come to Bates County in 1923 from Miller County Missouri with her parents James Franklin and Lillie Ethel (Burke) McDaniel. Herbert and Dorothy had a daughter, Dorothy Jean, born April 21, 1942 in a farm house in New Home Township, Bates County. The family bought a farm in 1947 about 2 miles east of Foster. Dorothy Jean went to school and church in Foster. On August 18, 1963, Albert Frank Morse, Jr. and Dorothy Jean Newcomb were married in the Foster Christian Church.

Foster, during its early days, had a population of around 2000, but today it is a little over 100. Most of the area around Foster is farm land, however, there are a few coal mines still operating.

MCG IN THE FUTURE

Marjorie Slavens

Midwest Computer Genealogists has met at Foxwood Springs in Raymore, Missouri since 2006. Previously, MCG meetings were held in an auditorium in the Bannister Mall Shopping Center, but it was necessary to change the meeting location when this center closed. Dr. Wayne Boydsden was President of this organization 20 years ago, Jim Stout was Vice President, and Don Bjuland was the Newsletter Editor. After we moved to Foxwood, Don Bjuland was President and Newsletter Editor until Al Morse assumed the position of President, and I became Newsletter Editor. For many Years, Ivan Waite was our Treasurer, and Byron Gilbreath has held this position recently.

When we met at Bannister, we had about 100 members who attended the meetings. However, some of our members were not able to travel to Raymore, and many members began doing their genealogy research on the net at such sites as Ancestry, Fold3, Archives, Family Search, Newspapers, etc, which became increasingly popular. Although our attendance has decreased, those who attend have been very faithful. We considered terminating the organization a few years ago, but we were told by members of other

genealogy organizations that many such organizations had decreasing attendance, and there was still a need for meetings for those who had continued to attend.

We have a larger mailing list for our MCG Newsletter than those who can attend meetings. Some of our members, who can no longer drive, still wanted to receive this communication and continue to follow the activities of the MCG.

President Al Morse, Treasurer Byron Gilbreath, and I have discussed the future of our MCG organization. Following the excellent work of Rowena Shaffer and Roger Rhoades as Program Chairs, I have also tried to maintain this position, but I do not believe I can continue to serve in this position. I enjoy researching material and writing for our newsletter; I learn a great deal from the research I must do to produce our monthly issues. We have not been able to identify a member to serve as Program Chair, and we believe our only option at present is to discontinue the work of this organization.

We very much appreciate the support of our excellent speakers, some of whom, such as Beth Foulk, Tom Rafiner, Jackie Roberts, Chelsea Clarke, Jim Beckner, and Peggy Buhr, have been frequent presenters through these years. We have also had support from presenters from the National Archives and the Midwest Genealogy Center. Special presentations by Kathleen Brandt on DNA and Bettina Havig from Columbia on Historical Missouri Quilts have been major highlights for us. We have had presentations recently by Julia Morse from Salina, Kansas, Don Knight from Peculiar, and Deb Downard from Belton as relatively new presenters. Some of our Foxwood Springs resident members, such as Ivan Waite, Byron Gilbreath, Mary Ray, and Al Morse have generously shared their research with us. We have enjoyed our sharing meetings when members have brought special family treasures to share with us.

We will need to bring up this matter at our November meeting. We will also need to decide how we are going to distribute the funds that we will still have in our account. We welcome suggestions from our members. There will be one more newsletter for this year in December.

[Copyright article removed for archive copy of this newsletter, 12 Mar 2020.]

JAMES KERR FAMILY

Marjorie Slavens

My mother, Mildred Welty Slavens, published her first edition of the *James Kerr family* in 1981. She published the third edition of this book in 2003. Her grandfather, Charles Merlin Kerr, was the 16th child of John Kerr, grandson of James Kerr, our immigrant ancestor, who came from Northern Ireland. He was in Philadelphia in 1741. He moved to an area near Harrisburg and died in Paxton Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (now Dauphin County) in July, 1748. He left a will made May 19, 1748. His oldest son, John, was born in 1711 and died in 1789 in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

John first moved to Pennsboro Township and Carlisle, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. His wife's name was Janet. He worked as a blacksmith and cutler in Carlisle. In 1762, he paid taxes in both Pennsboro Township and Carlisle. One of his daughters, Margaret, was married to John Heap, a prominent businessman in Carlisle. The Cumberland County Genealogical Society is now located in the Heap House. Another daughter, Mary, married William Graham, a graduate of Princeton and Presbyterian minister. He worked his way through college by teaching in a grammar school. On October 26, 1775, he was licensed to preach by the presbytery of Hanover, Virginia. The presbytery decided to start a school for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry, and William Graham was recommended for this position. This was the beginning of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, which became Washington and Lee University. On May 6, 1776, he was made the rector of Liberty Hall Academy. Its first formal commencement was in September 1785, when 12 A.B. degrees were given. The location was moved to Lexington in 1785. William Graham was a captain in the Revolutionary army.

John Kerr moved to Washington County in western Pennsylvania in 1781. He lived in Nottingham Township and attended the Pigeon Creek Presbyterian Church near the Dunningsville exit off Interstate 70 north of Washington, Pennsylvania. He died March 28, 1789; we have a copy of his will.

James Kerr, the oldest son of John Kerr and Janet, was born in 1759. He was also a blacksmith and cutler like his father in Washington County, Pennsylvania. His first wife was Elizabeth Power, daughter of the Rev. James Power, who settled in Westmorland County, Pennsylvania in 1774. She was born in 1767. Their children were: Mary (Polly) Moore, Jane Vance, James P. Kerr, Elizabeth (Betty) Scott, William, and John. James' will in 1834 divided some property among his four older children, but his son, William, inherited the home. James' second wife, also named Elizabeth, was to be supported by his sons, William and John, who were minor children when their mother, Elizabeth Power Kerr, died in 1823. William remained in Washington County, and John and his family moved west to Ohio.

John Kerr first married Susan Adams, daughter of William and Sarah Adams. We have Sarah's Bible, in which the names of the 12 children of John and Susan, born between 1831 and 1851, are written.
This Bible also includes the names and personal information of John's second wife, Mrs. Harriet Dale, whom he married in Dewitt County, Illinois in 1852. John married Elizabeth Crawford Brannon in 1857-58 (no marriage record found yet).

Elizabeth Crawford Brannon Kerr was the daughter of Eli and Nancy Adams Crawford, who were listed in Auglaize County, Ohio in the 1850 census and Macon County, Illinois in the 1860 census. Eli was born in 1803 in Delaware and Nancy was born in 1803 in Kentucky. Elizabeth's paternal grandparents were James and Elizabeth

Crawford of Green County, Ohio. Elizabeth Crawford Brannon Kerr was born July 25, 1829 and died July 20, 1911 in Scraper, Oklahoma. She was buried in Mollie Fields Cemetery. Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

John Kerr moved from Washington County, Pennsylvania to Licking County, Ohio (1840 Census), then to Union County, Ohio (1850 Census, listed as "Carr"), then to Dewitt County, Illinois in 1850, to Piatt County, Illinois (1860 U. S. Census and Illinois 1865 Census), to Cherokee County, Kansas (1865), and to Medoc, Jasper County, Missouri in 1866, where he died in 1870. Charles Merlin Kerr was 7 years old when his father died, and he lived with another family because his mother could not care for all of her children.

John married Susan Adams in 1830, and their children, with the exception of Lafayette, were born in Ohio. Their first son, William James, was evidently named for Susan's father, William Adams and John's father, James Kerr. The children of John Kerr and Susan Adams were: William James born August 18, 1831; David M. born October 16, 1832; Francis M. born February 9, 1834; Hezekiah S., born May 13, 1835, died September 4, 1835; Elijah Harrison, born September 23, 1836; Thomas, born September 24, 1837; Marinda, born June 25, 1840, died October 15, 1840; Mary Jane, born January 22, 1842; Joseph, born August 25, 1843; Nancy, born February 6, 1846; John Harvey, born August 16, 1847; Lafayette Scott, born April 3, 1851 in Illinois. John and Susan's daughter, Mary Jane Kerr Nicewander said John Kerr, Susan, and seven of their children went to Illinois in 1850 in two large covered wagons with eight horses. They cooked and camped by the wayside and slept in the wagons at night. Susan Adams Kerr died May 18, 1851.

John Kerr married Mrs. Harriet Dale February 22, 1852, and their daughter was Marthey A. born November 20, 1853. Harriet died in 1854. The children of John Kerr and Elizabeth Crawford Brannon were: Millard F. born August 21, 1859; Alice Luella, born December 25, 1861; Charles Merlin, born October 18, 1863; Huldah, born April 16, 1867, Missouri.

BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES MERLIN KERR

Mildred Welty Slavens

Charles Merlin Kerr, son of John Kerr and Elizabeth Crawford , was born October 18, 1863 in Piatt County, Illinois. He believed he was born in DeWitt County, but the census indicates that the family lived in Piatt County in the 1860 Census, and his sister, Mary Jane, said the family lived on a farm east of DeWitt before they left for Missouri. The 1865 Illinois State Census also showed them living in Piatt County.

He said the family left Illinois October 16, 1865 and traveled by covered wagon pulled by an ox team. They went to Kansas west of Asbury, Missouri, where they planned to take some of the Joy land, an area granted to a Mr. Joy by the government for building a railroad, which he did not build.

The family moved to Missouri in 1867 and settled near Medoc. Medoc was so new there were green stumps all over town when they arrived. Sedalia was the nearest source of supply. The town was built with a square and hoped to be the county seat. When the Joy railroad was not built, Carthage was made the county seat. He said he remembered seeing the soldiers on the military road on the way to Fort Scott, Kansas to be mustered out of the army. Following the death of his father, John Kerr, Charles lived with the George Bell family.

In 1886, Charles Kerr was helping build the railroad in Chautauqua County, Kansas, where he met Elzina H. (Ella) Heape, a daughter of James and Derrinda Teafertiller Heap. Ella Heape was born in Cherokee County, Kansas March 18, 1869. The Heaps were cooking meals for a group of railroad construction workers. James Heap was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Heape of Perry County, Illinois and Cherokee County, Kansas. Derrinda Tefertiller Heape was the daughter of George and Emily Walker Teafertiller of Perry County, Illinois and later of Dade County, Missouri. Charles and

Ella Heape were married at Peru, Kansas June 21, 1886. They returned to the Medoc, Missouri area, where they lived until about 1890, when they moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico. Charles worked as brakeman on the Santa Fe Railroad. Ella Heape Kerr died on February 17, 1895 following child birth at 6:30 p.m. The funeral took place at 2:00 p. m. at the home at 915 Gallinas Street. She died of "child bed fever". Charles Kerr was a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen. The newspaper, "The Optic", (February 18, 1895), asked the members to attend the funeral. Ella Kerr was buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery at Las Vegas, New Mexico.

A sister of Charles, Alice Kerr Scott, went to New Mexico to get the baby, Ella Mae, and took her home to care for her, but the baby later died. Unable to get someone to properly care for the children in New Mexico, Charles Kerr was forced to return to Missouri, where the children were placed in the care of a foster family, John Smith. Charles worked on the farm of John Bell in his coal bank. On July 30, 1896, Charles Kerr married Millie Bain, a daughter of Henry and Elvira Bain. She had one son from a previous marriage, Ray Connor Richardson. They built a house on her father's farm near Medoc and farmed there a while. On October 3, 1903, he bought a general store from John H. Barrett and he also bought a hotel so they would have a place to live. When Medoc failed to obtain the right of way for a railroad, they moved the contents of the store to Asbury, Missouri on March 8, 1907. They operated this store most of the time for the next 35 years. They quit the business in 1943. They had tried to sell the store several times but always had to take it back. At one time, Charles Kerr operated the grain elevator, served as president of the Bank of Asbury, and owned several farms in the area. Much of the land was used for making hay. Charles Kerr was one of the leading citizens of the community from 1907 until two years before his death in 1962, when he moved to Carl Junction, Missouri.

Charles Kerr was married to Millie Bain Kerr for 62 years until her death in March, 1959. They celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in July, 1946 with an open house. All the relatives were present for the occasion, as well as many friends and neighbors. Among the many events of his long life about which he liked to talk was his purchase of the first car in the community, a 1906 Maxwell. He continued to drive his own car until he was past 90 years old. He liked to tell stories about the early days in Missouri and New Mexico and remembered seeing Jesse James when he was a boy. He was an active member of the Odd Fellow Lodge at Asbury and later of the lodge at Carl Junction. He was a staunch Republican, and he was always interested in newspaper and radio accounts of everything from politics to agriculture to baseball. On June 14, 1961, he was awarded a bronze plaque by the Young Democrats of Jasper County, Missouri because, at the age of 97, he was the oldest voter in the county to participate in the election of 1960. He remained active and alert until shortly before his death at St. John's Hospital in Joplin, Missouri on April 8, 1962 at the age of 98. He was buried in Crocker Cemetery near Opolis, Kansas. His children were: Carrie, died in infancy, Hattie Lee Kerr Welty, Ora A. Kerr and Ella Mae. (From Family of James Kerr, by Mildred Welty Slavens and posted on the Jasper County, Missouri USGenweb site on Sun, 03 Jan 1999. One of 3 Biographies submitted to the Jasper County site; the others are of grandfather, Henry Welty, and great grandfather, Jonathan Eppright.)

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